**Theseus and the Minotaur**

Poseidon had given a beautiful bull to King Minos with the assumption that Minos would sacrifice it to Poseidon, but Minos could not bear to kill the bull, so he kept it for himself. Poseidon decided that Minos should be punished, so he made Pasiphaë fall in love with the bull. Nature took its course, and the offspring from their relationship was the Minotaur, a creature that was half-man and half-bull.

When the Minotaur was born, Minos did not kill it, but it was still an embarrassment to the family, with poor manners and a tendency to kill and eat people. So he had Daedalus, a great architect and inventor, build a place to confine the Minotaur so the Minotaur could not escape. Daedalus built the Labyrinth, a structure that was famous throughout the world. It was a very complicated maze, and whoever was put inside of it could never find their way out alive.

Meanwhile, King Minos had been at war with Greece, and one of his demands was that sent seven maidens and seven youths to Crete every nine years. When the 14 Athenians arrived in Crete, they were given to the Minotaur to devour.

Theseus was a great hero of Athens. After hearing the story of Minos and the tributes to him every nine years, Theseus offered to be one of the victims that was to be sent. Everyone praised him for his nobility, but they had no idea that Theseus would try to kill the Minotaur once inside the maze. He told his father that if he was successful, he would change the sail of the ship that carried the victims from black to white to tell the king of his success well in advance of his arrival in Greece. This was to show that Theseus had survived.

When the victims arrived on the island of Crete, they were paraded around before the inhabitants on their way to the maze. Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, was one of the spectators, and she fell in love with Theseus as soon as she saw him. She quickly summoned for Daedalus to ask if there was a way out of the Labyrinth. Ariadne promised Theseus the answer to getting out of the Labyrinth if he would take her back to Athens and marry her.

He agreed to this arrangement, and she gave him a ball of thread which he could attach to the entrance of the Labyrinth. This would allow him to re-trace his steps whenever his wished, by just following the path of string backwards.

So Theseus made his way into the Labyrinth to find the Minotaur. He allowed the ball of thread to unwind so that he could re-trace his journey later. It wasn't long before he came across the Minotaur; the Minotaur was sleeping. Theseus jumped on the creature and pinned him to the ground. Then, Theseus proceeded to batter the beast to death. Once the Minotaur was dead, he got up and found his ball of thread. Theseus instructed the other people out of the maze while following the ball of thread that guided the way.

They boarded the ship that they arrived on and happily headed towards back Athens. Theseus’ boat stopped at Naxos and the Athenians had a long celebration dedicated to Theseus and Ariadne. After long hours of feasting and drinking, Ariadne fell asleep on the shore and didn’t enter the boat that sailed to Athens. Theseus figured out that Ariadne was not with them when it was too late and he was so upset that he forgot the promise made to his father and did not change the sails from white to black.

As Theseus’s ship approached Athens, his father, Aegeus, saw the black sails and thought his son had died on his mission. He was devastated, and committed suicide by throwing himself into the sea. The sea was named the Aegean Sea in his honor. Due to his father’s death, Theseus now became the king of Athens. He was credited with moving the government to a democratic style of governing.

